



SEASONING FOR A SEASONER:

OR,

THE NEW GRADUS AD PARNASSUM.

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SEASONING FOR A SEASONER:

OR, THE

NEW GRADUS AD PARNASSUM.

A Satire.

BY BROOK B. STEVENS.

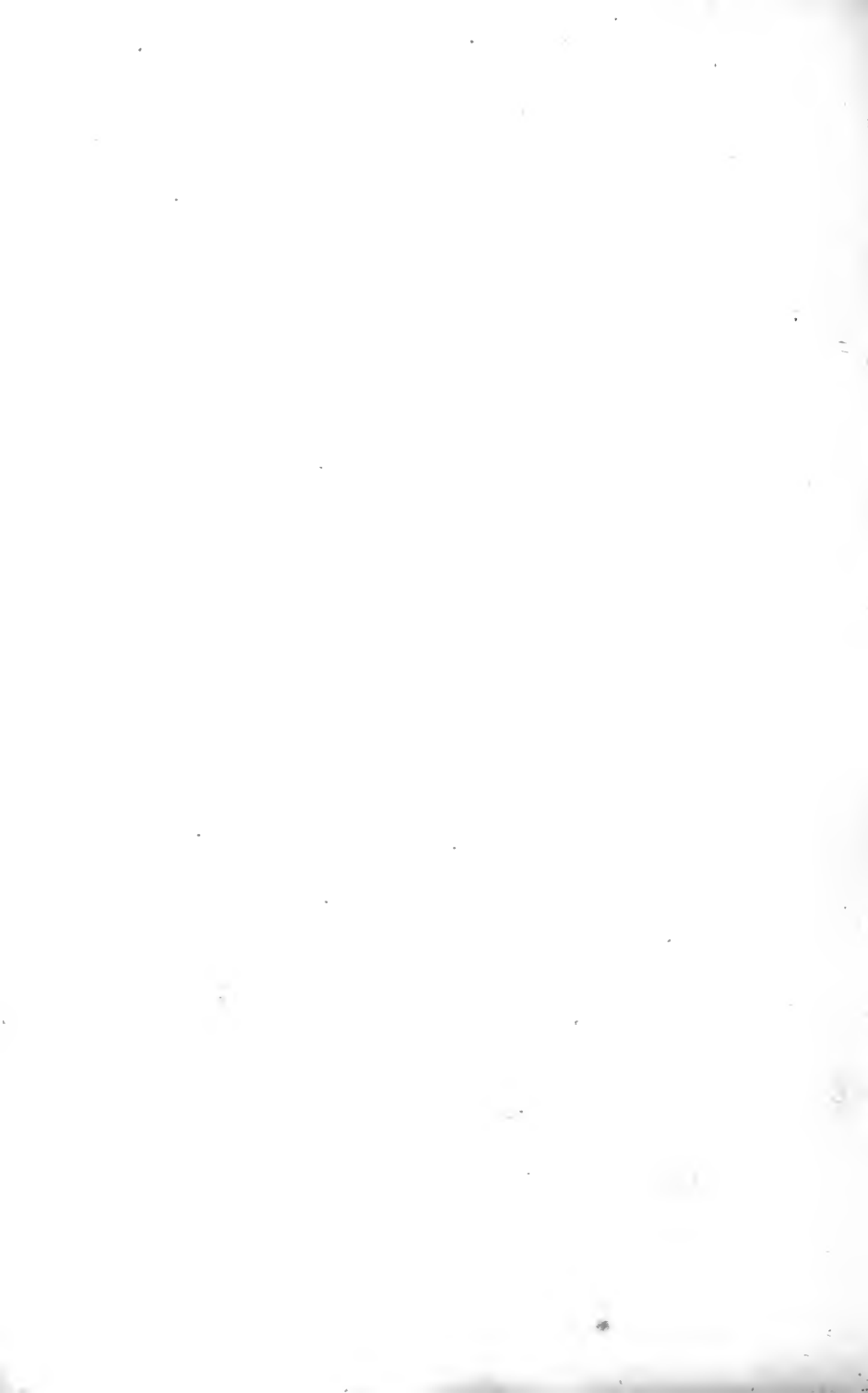
"I find there is no person so irresistible as one who is a man of importance—provided it be in matters of no consequence. One who makes himself talked of, though it be for the particular cock of his hat, or for prating aloud, is in a fair way of being a favourite; and I have known a young fellow make his fortune by knocking down a constable."—*Spectator*, No. 602.

"Qui Bævium non edit, amet tua carmina, Mævi."—*Virgil Ecl. iii.*

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TO SAVILE WARNER STEVENS,
THESE LINES ARE
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE following lines were written shortly after the appearance of Mr. Alfred Austin's poem, *My Satire and Its Censors*. Owing to circumstances over which the author had no control, and to which it would be irrelevant further to refer, their publication has thus long been delayed.

It may be objected to metrical diversions of this kind that the writer, while caricaturing the bad taste of another, may insensibly fall himself into a bad imitation of a bad thing. He may be reminded that the Spartans, while teaching their children the evils of inebriety, by the example of their drunken Helots, were generally careful not to get drunk themselves.

On the other hand, he would observe that in his Satire will be found no coarse personalities

PREFACE.

relating to men's private lives, and that the element of malice is entirely absent therefrom. He has neither pique to gratify nor any private grievance of a wounded vanity to parade before the public: rightly or wrongly considering, even if he had, that the wincing of the proverbial "galled jade" is generally accepted as the surest indication of wrong withers.

With these prefatory remarks, like Mr. Austin, a young trespasser on the "Tom Tickler's ground" of satire, he commits himself to the peril of print. If the public's verdict be adverse, he will have no reason to complain that, expecting little favour, he receives still less. And if any of his readers are good enough to discern any merit in what was originally intended but as pastime for a few idle hours, this satire will not wholly have been a work of supererogation, and he will

"Think it a most plenteous crop,
To glean the broken ears, after the man
That the main harvest reaps."

SEASONING FOR A SEASONER:

OR,

THE NEW GRADUS AD PARNASSUM.

Too proud to beg—too much afraid to steal,
To dig too lazy, though it brought a meal,
To live by print I've found the last receipt;
(I may be tedious—but e'en bores must eat);
To Austin's satires since the public list,
I'll sneer myself into a satirist.
Ye Great Unread! wipe beer-mused eyes, and see
A "Daniel come to judgment," friends, in me.
You who, so long unknown to type and fame,
Have seldom spoiled a column with your name;

Whose choicest "copy" editors "regret"
Is all "unsuitable," and all unset;
Lift up your heads, and bless the man who gave
The realm of satire, as Adullam's cave*
For weakly wits, rejected sonneteers,
Dull donkey-drivers of poor, fagged ideas;
The men whose names in print one seldom sees,
The "smart young men" of smart young coteries;
Great at the "Albion"—greater, if less grand,
O'er gin and water half-way down the Strand,
Where the "Red Lion's" gas across the street
Flares out late welcome for discussion sweet
For veterans weary from the last "half-turn,"†
Who drowsily their rank tobacco burn,

* David escaped to the cave Adullam . . . and every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was *discontented*, gathered themselves unto him.—1 Samuel xxii.

† The period during which each Parliamentary reporter remains on duty is called his "turn."

And sitting hours within that genial room,
Risking asphyxia from each floating fume,
Hear Prodgers' scheme to lessen England's debt,
While counting coppers for more "heavy wet;"
Hear Tomkins murmur, redolent of gin—
"I'm tired of Pam—the Tories must come in;"
Listen to men, of whom, alas! I see
The world's not worthy—and don't want to be.
Dear friends of old, no more with you I'll sit,
And laugh at ribaldry and call it wit;
Words into verse instead, I'll strive to twist,
Tickling the town to term me satirist.

Bring me more galls—mix vitriol with this ink,
Great Muse of Dullness, teach me how to think—
To screech at everyone—till, with a smile,
The world saith—"Lo! a second-hand Carlyle."
So to my theme—periphrasis I'll drop;
Down go my shutters—patronise my shop.

Unknown to fame—save where on wall or post,
Big bills proclaim how soon men's money's lost,
I'm dubbed an author—penny numbers—tales,
Bought up by thousands, at waste-paper sales :
“ Peter the Pirate, or the Demon Bark :”
“ The Natural History of Noah's Ark ;”
“ The Mormon's Niece, or Brigham Young's Revenge ;”
“ The Druid's Doom—A Mystery of Stonehenge,”—
My name's there seen—each day I cry, woe's me,
Among such prints, my first dear work to see ;
But comfort still I often take in this :
A butterfly must be a chrysalis.

Satire's my theme—until soured scribblers smile
O'er hot-pressed insolence and well-bound bile ;
If any editor henceforth shall dare
To “ burke ” my “ copy ”—let that man beware :
On him I'll pour the vials of my wrath,
And trace his manhood to his boyhood's path ;

Roundly abuse, or in my ranc'rous mirth
 Buke up the circumstance of humble birth ;
 Trace him to boyhood on a three-legged stool,
 And now, sir, now, wilt write me down a fool ?
 Shall I, because some maudlin magazine
 Rejects my story—"Crime and Crinoline"—
 Shall I cry craven ? shall I whimpering own
 Their malice nought—the fault my tale's alone ?
 Never !—I still can scribble on in verse,
 (I may write better, if I can't write worse),
 Until worn-out, pale editors agree,
 A Day-star hath arisen—meaning me.

Satire's my theme—for, honest truth to tell—
 Ill-natured silliness is sure to sell.
 Random I'll strike—it may be, now and then,
 I'll hit more lucky literary men ;

And if my arm should lack splenetic force,
I'll howl at every one till fairly hoarse.
So in a kennel I ere now I have seen
Hounds round a trough that hunger'd nigh licked clean,
The strong press in, the prize of strength to take,
While weaker dogs a meagre dinner make,
While here and there some hungry hound, unblest,
With empty stomach, howls at all the rest.

Suppose, regardless of an envious clique,
I send some manuscript to "Once a Week;"
"War to the knife"—I'd say with Palafox,*
If it should rest within their "Balaam-box."
"All the Year Round," henceforth my wrath must burn
'Gainst Dickens greatly daring to return

* Palafox thus replied to the French general at the siege of Saragoza.

That clever article of mine—"Old Clo'"—
Showing how garments to the East End go ;
Tracing the course of east-off coats and "smalls"
Unto Duke's Place,* from Piccadilly's halls.
With Sala, too, I'll wage wild, wordy war :
(Is he not Editor of "Temple Bar?")
Did I not send him—though he didn't ask it—
My "Waifs and Strays from my Waste-Paper Basket,"
"Lays of the Lazy," "Women's Rights and Wrongs?"
Are they not better than B——'s "City Songs?"
Where are they now?—on him my wrath shall fall—
Returned "with thanks,"—or not returned at all.
Much has he written—sure it's hardly good,
Though widely read, admired, and understood ;
Say you—"He's skill in turning up old ground?"

* Duke's-place, Aldgate, where is the famous "Old Clo'"
Exchange.

I'll, smiling, sneer, and say—"He's scarcely sound."
Say you—"He's smart, clear-sighted, and acute ;"
I'll grant he's microscopically minute ;
"His memory marvellous no need to jog ;"
Well, he's correct—so is a catalogue,
Or broker's inventory—where all is shown,
And every crack on every tea-cup known ;
Such is his accuracy you'll ever find :
I hate this teasing Tunbridge-ware of mind.
Now on his narrative five lines he dwells,
Then wastes a column upon something else,
Some unasked incident you did not want,
With erudition most irrelevant :
Reminding me of Sheridan's old jest,*
Touching the Phoenix—Moore will tell the rest ;

* "Describing to us the poem which Mr. Whitbread had written and sent in, among the other addresses for the opening of Drury

Should Sala paint a Phoenix—he'd not err :

Only he'd paint it—like a "poulterer!"

Dared he reject me? Ha! he little wist

A scribbler's spite would make—a satirist!

And those mar-poets of the "Athenæum,"

Who sting like wasps, unless with "feeds" you fee 'em ;

All I'll attack, until by chance I fix one,

Deftly alliterating "dunce"* with "Dixon ;"

Until, long chewing anger's bitter cud,

At last they own I've skill in throwing mud.

Oh! Austin, Persius, Dryden, Churchill, Pope,

(I'll hang myself in rhyme but give me rope)

Lane, and which, like the rest, turned chiefly on allusions to the Phoenix, Sheridan said :—"But Whitbread made more of this bird than any of them,—he entered into particulars, and described its wings, beak, tail, &c.—in short it was a *poulterer's* description of a Phoenix!"—MOORE'S LIFE OF SHERIDAN, vol. ii. page 439.

* See "My Satire and its Censors," by Mr. Austin, for this pleasing alliteration.

O ! ye great satirists of erring men,
Look to your laurels when *I* mend my pen.
Is there a gentleman I ever knew
As writing in the "Saturday Review,"
Him I'll address, most personally pert,*
Prove my gentility by throwing dirt,
Infringe each law of scribbling etiquette
His name before the public eye to set ;
Pelt with long primer—pillory in prose,
For verse will flag—as every scribbler knows ;
Pursue his privacy and write it down
To please each knowing nobody 'bout town ;
Probe him with praise—insult him with advice—
Then sink to sarcasm—and in a trice
Call him by name hard epithets by dozens,
Familiarly as though we were first cousins ;

* *Vide* Mr. Austin's "Note of Admiration" addressed to Mr. Cooke.

Name all his staff—to show my public then
 I know the names of sundry clever men;
 Making Malignity take Fancy's wing,
 Buzzing about them, if I cannot sting;
 Till unto Cooke the wondrous fact is known,
 My inkstand's as ill-natured as his own.
 Then change my rôle—and ere my spleen grows less,
 Turn to a general tilt against success.

There's Thackeray—I loved him in raw youth,
 Taking his tart philosophy for truth;
 His old, old songs,* learned from the Preacher wise,
 That all is—vanity of vanities.

* See the verses by Mr. Thackeray in the July number (1860) of the *Cornhill Magazine*, headed "Vanitas Vanitatum," and beginning thus:—

"How spake of old the Royal seer?
 (His text is one I love to treat on.)
 This life of ours, he said, is sheer
Mataiotes Mataioteton."

From life, say you, his characters he draws ;
But while so saying, for a moment pause :
Year after year he doth himself repeat
In the same style of constant bitter-sweet ;
Philip is but Pendennis in new dress,
The self-same character, if coloured less.
Year after year this man doth write away,
Still Thackeray repeating Thackeray ;
Nought from his sneer escapes in human life,
Nor spinster, bachelor, nor man, nor wife.
Find a good action—Thackeray will prove,
(And joy in proof) its mainspring was self-love ;
And if he heard an ill report of you,
Would he not smile, and love to think it true ?
Say, would you call McGilp an artist wise
If for his studies he went down to Guy's ?
Doth Thackeray better—picking for his pen
The poor, pet weaknesses of other men ?

Life-like and true his pictures you may call—
And life they are—but life in hospital.

Come next to Bulwer—honour where 'tis due—
Pray don't forget The Beautiful, The True;
Print 'em with capitals, as, if you look,
You'll find he does in every witching book:
Excuse the pedantry—a trick of style
Copied from Germans, copied by Carlyle.
His scraps of Plato pearls to swine may be;
But ornate English—French morality—
Blended with Bulwer's potency of plot,
Must win him readers till the rest's forgot:
The mist from Germany, *esprit* from France;
Who, while he fiddles, would not choose but dance?
See Eugene Aram, who did butcher Clarke
In Knaresborough cave, one evening after dark,

After he'd perpetrated deeds like these,
Go blandly back to sup on Sophocles ;
Simp'ring smooth sophistries, until his crime
Seems rounded-off romantically in time.
Oh! Genius, what a privilege it is
To canonise a cut-throat thief like this !
Then there's Maltravers—who "protected" one
Of nature's children glad to be undone :
Seduction seems less sinful, when you've seen
Sin clad in our romancer's crinoline.
Then see Paul Clifford—a felonious brute,
Simply Jack Sheppard in a better suit.
Then in "My Novel" dine on dainty food,
Vice that's too vicious, virtue that's too good.

Place for Charles Dickens ! - ah ! alas, I must
Own Aristides can't be called too just ;

Sore 'gainst the grain, I own, with baffled spite,
 That here's a man whose heart and head are right.
 He'll never read this diatribe of mine ;
I never drank a wine-glass of his wine—
I never "slaver" men, come foul or fair,
 Like male "Delilahs," who do "cut his hair."*
 With him *I* dine not, so am somewhat loth
 To blame his friendships, as our Austin doth.
 With whom he dines, is really nought to me ;
 I'm not his butler—and his privacy
 He best himself has right to regulate,
 Without a scribbler's patronising prate.

* "O. Dickens ! Dickens ! yours this flimsy brood :
 They kept by you, and you by them kotoned.
 They call you Demi-god : you think it true :
 First you feed them, and then they slaver you.
 Fast for an article, a place to dine,
 They crib your jokes the while they drain your wine.
 Can you not see, collected round your chair,
 These base Delilahs cutting off your hair ?"—AUSTIN.

Into his dining-room if Austin looks—
I only know Charles Dickens in his books.
I too, thank God, have known a Little Nell,
Who died as young—who nobly lived as well—
I too have known a quaint old bach'lor ripe,
Of whom his Pickwick was a prototype ;
I too have had a sick nurse of the stamp—
Umbrella, gin, and talk of Sairey Gamp.
Oft have come back to me my dear old times,
While late up listening to the Christmas Chimes ;
And, like his book, those chimes have taught me then
A broader goodwill to my fellow-men.
Inspector Bucket long ago I've known—
The nicer traits were all the author's own :
Strange that a pen should have the power to yield
Us loving interest e'en in Mr. Field !
Sam Weller—no ! Sam Wellers I've seen none,
Unless “ three ” servantmen “ rolled into one ”

Might make the character ; and then my three
Would prove a failure in such unity.

Great are his gifts—his failings, not a few,
I leave to Austin and the carping crew ;
And own for once, e'en Satire's self's outdone,
And blushes to seek spots upon the sun.

Then there's the authoress of " Adam Bede :"
I hate her book—because it did succeed :
Of course I wonder what the town can see
In " realistic," grand simplicity :
At Mrs. Poyser *I* could never laugh,
Although fools say—" good as a photograph !"
What then ? If true, 'tis trite truth at the best ;
Those humdrum clodhoppers I do detest.
Teniers-like writing, marvell'sly minute,
Teaching town country, it the town may suit.

Teniers himself doth on *my* palate pall :

Dutch boors well drawn are boors, sir, after all.

Then there's Du Chaillu—let me own he's skill ;

So had Munchausen ; so had Mandeville—

Him I'd abuse, had not the learned Gray

Called him a liar in Pickwickian way—

Him I'd insult ; but warned by poor Malone,

And fearing lest his fate might prove *my* own,

And undesirous of prompt proof on me,

How like Gorillas gentlemen can be,

The peace to keep I'll own, as others do,

That what's incredible may yet be true.

Then there is Ainsworth—a great fame hath he,

For shedding haloes round dishonesty.

Now down at Rookwood, making flesh to creep
With sexton's songs ; and now, six bottles deep,
Showing us Turpin, the north-highway's pride,
That gay, defiant, genial homicide.
Then, with Jack Sheppard—who so blithe as he
Can tell the humours of the Tyburn tree,
Call up Poll Maggot and her ribald train,
Till Shepperd steals upon life's stage again,
Blue-skin, and Bess, Wild, Abraham, and all !
Romantic crime's Attorney-General ;
Making his book for felony a brief,
Till urchins sigh—" I wish I was a thief !"
Then change the scene, and enter Old St. Paul's ;
Hear ribaldry re-echo round its walls ;
While death-carts rumble reekingly abroad,
Charles flaunts with harlots through the fane of God :
The plague without—a ribald court within—
A masque of motley, God-defying sin :

On scenes like these our Ainsworth loves descant,
A prurient pandar to a morbid want.

Oh ! ye spasmodic bards, to you be praise,
Ye are the poets of these latter days,
When Pope forgotten—Campbell but a noise,
And Rogers mildly singing mem'ry's joys,
Have passed into oblivion—to make way
For you, and those who copy you to-day—
Ye spawn of Tennyson without his pith,
Thin shades of Shelley—you, “Life-Drama” Smith,
Fine “Festus” Bailey, and our dear Dobell,
Whose rant in “Balder” pleased town-taste so well.
“Balder” Dobell—now mouthing madness wild,
Now namby-pamby as a little child ;
Spasmodically showing to our time
How twaddle, crusted with blank verse or rhyme,

Mistily vague, will muster pass for good,
Dressed up until by none 'tis understood.
Screech incoherently—till, maudlin grown,
Our tears we mildly mingle with your own ;
And fancy pathos where 'tis nonsense all ;
And praise ye for thus playing cup and ball
With rhyme and reason—oh ! it pays to write,
Prating long columns of the infinite,
Dark, mournful mysteries of human being,
Which, through your spectacles, the town is seeing ;
While morbidly complaints ye do rehearse
'Gainst God's arrangement of His universe ;
Finding out ulcers in the human heart,
And calling us to witness how they smart ;
Morbidly trading on man's mental ills ;
Ignoring utterly strong human wills ;
If you *are* morbid—why call us to watch ye ?
Suffer in peace, don't ask the world to scratch ye.

Then there's Mackay—the bard of labour's claims,
Because much read, deserves some ugly names.
“ Repeat with variations ”—is his plan,
Till all grow sick of constant working man.
Perdrix toujours at best's a dreary bore ;
You've given us too much partridge, sir, before ;
And “ Groans From Labour,” “ Horny-handed Ned,”
Well in their place, are well the first time read.
We all respect the men who make our soil
The country that it is, by manly toil ;
But that's no reason why a wrought-out bard
To prove their worth—should work himself as hard,
Telling us ever, as this Doctor would,
They have the sole monopoly of good !

Oh ! *****, paymaster, and guide and friend
To needy men of letters without end,

Who to your presence can admission win,
To shoot their rubbish into your dust-bin,
Give *me* some work ; and let *me* tell the town,
“ Detective ” Dodges : or the Beaks Done Brown ;”
“ Ex-Footmen’s Diaries ”—are good for trade—
“ Confessions of a Country Chambermaid”
Would sell as “ thrilling”—buy ‘em out and out ;
You’d sell twelve thousand, I have little doubt :
All these to order I’m prepared to write,
Or else I’ll publish this receipt in spite,
Telling the world—unless you pay me dumb—
The source from which your “ thrilling” volumes come.
Take of French prurience the staler part,
Mix with home-crime, and season up with art
The raciest cases from Sir Cresswell’s Court,
Ditto last murder—*vide* best report.
If fancy flags, or murder’s out of date,
Buy some French novels—plagiarise—translate—

And if, e'en then, material should be scant,
The kind Museum will supply the want :
Pick bloody murders from the page of time,
And call them curtly—" Afternoons with Crime !"
To serve 'em up, hunt out your scribbling hacks all,
And failing these—of course fall back on W——l.

Oh ! dear Museum, Alma Mater mine,
To thee I owed some dinners in " lang syne ;"
Dear is thy Library to hungry men,
Who leave at five the books they sought at ten ;
Here for fagged scribblers, scheming whence to steal,
Are mental rations for full many a meal ;
Here's Nicholls,* Pepys, and witty Walpole, too ;
Here's Madame D'Arblay—bless that dear *Bas Bleu* !

* Nicholls' Literary Anecdotes.

Here Hervey† simpers through much easy prose,
Here sullen Swift hits furious body-blows ;
Encyclopædia on the walls abound,
And books of reference the whole way round ;
Here, like a bee, from Russia leather flowers—
Here can I steal ideas six long hours ;
Then copy fair—and for the theft atone,
By sticking in some twaddle of my own ;
Choose a smart head-line—in a month it's seen,
Right in the middle of some magazine
A first-rate article—a first-rate plan—
Try it—and be a “ literary man.”
Thus may the thoughts some better man of yore
Gave to the world from out his spirit's store,
Descend in time, small readers to amuse,
Translated, just as cobblers “ translate” shoes :

* Lord Hervey, the “ Sporus” of Pope's satire.

Thus you will see some thought that once was good,
Patched up—"translated," by some head of wood :
Some sneer of Swift's, vamped up with talent small,
Till readers cry—"La ! how original."
So have I seen in musty Monmouth Street,
Where worn out trousers and cracked "highlows" meet
In queer confusion on some Hebrew's board,
Some "Bluchers"—once the "Bluchers" of a lord —
Bought for a shilling—soled for one and six,
Turned out like new, thanks to "translating" tricks,
Doomed once again to walk about the town,
Purchased by straying Smith or blundering Brown,
Who, as they saunter idly down the Strand,
Chuckle o'er boots they know are second-hand.

Nor must I pass thee, unto whom is due
My meed of malice, popular Bellew,

My aunt's pet parson—with thy sugared style,
Effective costume, and calm, courtly smile;
Thy graphic gestures, grand delivery's grace,
Prove thee great actor greatly out of place.
Within my time few fitter pets I've seen,
To win poor sinners in wide crinoline.
Great is thine office—thou its claims dost know:
'Tween sin in silk and sin in calico,
Pet preachers ought to draw distinctions wide,
Nor press too hardly on sin's silken side.
If Lord Fitzswindle cheats by bet or bill,
'Tis not as bad as if he robbed a till;
In vice 'tis well to bear in mind degrees:
The sin that courts St. John's Wood cottages,
That rides "rampagiously" in Rotten Row,
Can't be so bad—it's not one half so low—
As that which every day a man may meet
Ogling the loungers about Regent-street,

Sickening each sense with poor enticements stale,
Bound for the brothel, hospital, or gaol.
Polish thy platitudes—no need to grapple
With sterner stuff—it would not fill thy chapel;
In such good company strong words would err :
Thy flock would run away from Latimer.
Interest, not principle, thy plan should be :
Pew-rents pay better than pure piety.

Oh ! Boanerges from Blackfriars Road,
Oh ! blatant, brimstone-loving man of God,
Shall I my heart against thy merits harden,
Have I not heard thee preach in Surrey Garden,
And seen thy Tabernacle to the ceiling crammed,
Paying a shilling to be told I'm damned ?
Have I not heard thee heated hundreds urging,
To “ put on righteousness,” and come to Spurgeon ?

Have I not seen the great ones of this nation,
'Midst vulgar piety and perspiration,
Listening to thee, on every joke intent,
Thou "Triton 'mongst the minnows" of Dissent?

Nor mystic Cumming, let me pass by thee,
Thou Calvinistic curiosity,
Great are thy gifts, as all thy flock report;
When last I heard thee preaching in Crown-court,
Preaching like prophecy—I could not choose
But shiver as I sat within my shoes,
Hearing thee make God's future dealings plain,
(As "Old Moore" prophesies 'bout next year's rain,)
Hearing thee twist the Word of God to pieces,
Scaring the holders of precarious leases,
Hearing how soon to cancel them will come
Upon the earth the mild millennium!

Nor thou, bold Blondin, should'st escape some part
Of my ill-nature —thou, with such “high art,”
Drawest the town to Sydenham —there to see
How near to death an acrobat dare be,
And yet —yet die not —nor the crowding check
By instant dislocation of his neck !
How safely horrible, to see thee walk
Along thy rope with well-feigned slip and baulk ;
To think when gazing on thy frank, bold smile,
It is just possible thou'lt fall meanwhile !
Sweet satisfaction ! — yet it can't be less
To amiable ogres in “swell” dress.
Oh ! Blondin, Blondin, list awhile to me,
And hear some home-truths out of charity.
They'll pay to see thee risk thy clever life,
They'll pay to keep thee and thy child and wife ;
But break thy neck —and then we'll see, *mon brave*,
They'd say “We knew he would !” and —let them starve.

Speaking of acrobats, it doth but seem
A natural sequence in a scribbler's theme,
To speak of statesmen —let me speak of one
Who 's tried each phase of thinking 'neath the sun.
Come, form a ring, and let me pass the hat
Around for praises of *my* acrobat,
A nobler Blondin, who has risked his fame
So many a time at many a dang'rous game ;
A quondam Radical—through thick and thin,
Changing his politics—as snakes their skin.
Come, men of Buckingham, and list to me,
I sing the praises of your great M.P.,
Who Proteus' self in every line 's surpassed,
Each new skin fitting better than the last :
Now " Vivian Grey," that pert, ambitious boy,
And now a mouthing maniac in " Alroy ;"
Now simpering forth a tender tale of loves,
Mild as the fabled milk of turtle-doves ;

Now writing verse concerning " Revolution ;"
Now " vindicating " England's constitution ;
And now in stronger fiction soaring high,
Winning our suffrages for " Coningsby ;"
Finding midst politics old tracks anew
Of " Asian mysteries "—a wandering Jew !
Oh ! for the sharpest pen of Gillott's steel,
To assail the slanderer of noble Peel ;
Who, with his Bentinck smiling at his back,
Cheered on the yelling hatred of his pack ;
Barbing his arrow with a poisoned lie,
Raked from the ashes of stale calumny ;
Raking dead Canning's quarrel up again,
Placing ill-nature neatly in mortmain ;
Sneering in savage sarcasm at one
Who dared to do as he himself had done,
Had it but paid him in his earlier day,
When he with Radicals awhile did stray, *Milton* ..

Thinking, perchance, some half-way house he'd spy
Along the path of popularity.

But Peel is gone—we each day feel the dearth

Of master spirits, such as his, on earth :

Gone is the man who nobly to Free Trade

Gave up the friendships a great life had made ;

Greatest was Peel—when reason gave the lie

To old convictions—in “ apostacy,”

Leaving the party where he had been head,

To take a tax from off the poor man's bread.

This was the man whom Faction's falsehood stung ;

This was the victim of a lambent tongue ;

Ne'er till he died his worth our country knew—

God and that country judge between the two !

Tune up, my Muse, give forth a livelier strain,

And sing Lord Palmerston with might and main,

That jovial Nestor—that gay evergreen,

Past seventy gay as erst at seventeen ;

Whose light good temper through a long debate
Will make one quite forget the House sits late :
“ Oh ! blessed with temper, whose unclouded ray,”
(From Pope this line I borrowed yesterday,)
Can win one's vote, although one scarce knows why,
Throwing its sunshine even round “ Supply !”
St. Stephen's Momus, past three score and ten,
Funnier by far than half its “ funny men :”
Now raising roars in sly, grimacing glee,
At Vincent Scully, or poor Hennessey ;
Now in the City winning hearts again
Of aldermen o'er turtle and champagne ;
Now making speeches to the Harrow boys,
Warming o'er memories of school-time joys ;
Now charming deputations with that air
Of blithe good nature, brisk and *debonnaire*,
Making them feel (although their prayer's refused,)
Half 'gainst their will, content to be amused,

And inly wondering how't can ever be
Denial comes more pleasantly from thee,
Than would the grant of all their prayer doth show,
From one less skilled in gently saying "No!"
"Triumphs of temper"—such as Hayley knew,
Though such example Hayley never drew;
Oh! for Aladdin's lamp to show to me
The fount of such perennial gaiety.
Yet in St. Stephen's thou art wronged by those
Dull brains who carp at thee as all jocose:—
Thou'rt something nobler when occasion calls:
"Civis Romanus sum,"—within those walls
Will be remembered to thine honour yet,
Like streaks of glory, when thy sun hath set.
Falsehood's proved fangless, in the Frenchman's sneer,
Time's proved thee more than "Palmerston Pour Rire."
Thy like will never smile upon our sons;
One century cannot count two Palmerstons.

Thus far as Satirist I've spit my spite,
Careless of false or true, or wrong or right,
Reckless of reticence, or rhyme, or reason ;
Envious of Austin—envious of “The Season ;”
Marvelling much howe'er it came to pass
I dared in rhyme to write myself an ass,
Play tricks with prosody—and limp along
In all the lameness of unwonted song.
As Mordecāi sitting at the gate,*
Of unhung Haman roused the heathen hate ;
So, Austin sitting higher—on the throne
Of sneering satire—may excuse my own,
And while I sulkily do hang my head,
Make me hate Austin—just because he's read !

* At the gate of Ahasuerus.

Ah! me, the curse of ignorance of the great:
My book to no one can *I* dedicate,*
No Tory Triton, no new-fledged M.P.,
No patronising mediocrity,
Who, when, too rash, I plunge at last in print,
Wiser than I, will see some merit in't.
An unknown nobody—for praise or pelf,
I struggle on, sad, sullen, by myself;
An unknown nobody—I climb afar
Parnassus' Mount, where high th' immortals are,
Austin, and Dryden, Pope, and he who writ
"The Rosciad"—and he, that biter bit,
Great Barnard Gregory,† his mark who missed,
Slandering our sisters in the "The Satirist."

* The Right Hon. B. D'Israeli has taken Mr. Austin under his wing by accepting a dedication.

† The too notorious editor of "The Satirist" newspaper now, like his journal, some years defunct.

Hard is his lot, whom, with a scorn-curved lip,
Austin, in flush of "white-kid" authorship,
Flouts for his poverty and dire offence
Of dining for the sum of "fifteen pence;"
Shame fall on him, poor literary sinner,
Who, unlike Austin, daily earns his dinner ;
Who, hungry oft, will find a failing lute,
Once silvery clear, grow miserably mute ;
Or weakly wailing, as with tears half shed,
He strikes, too tremulous, its chords for bread :
A theme for satire's keenest-piercing dart,
Come, probe pale Poverty's most tender part,
To prove to us, the while in verse you mock it,
Your veneration of your breeches-pocket.*

* Like Pope, of whom Dr. Johnson writes :—"The great topic of his ridicule is poverty ; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner"—the staple of Mr. Austin's invective against adverse authors, would seem to be their supposed empty

Hard is his lot whose Pegasus must go
Daily with little luxury of "Woh!"
Much without kicking Pegasus must bear,
Or stop and starving find no provender.
Hard is his lot who lives by literature,
Who each day learns the better to endure
So many snubs from editors morose,
Who *will* not see the point in verse or prose,
Of him who's doomed—in intellect's despite,
To write to live—instead of live to write;

stomachs and craving impecuniosity. Indeed it would be difficult to find in any other satirical poem of the length of "My Satire and Its Censors," so many delicate allusions to these supposed facts, as Mr. Austin there makes with such apparent gusto. He should remember, however, that even with Pope for a precedent, he may err in trying to resemble Pope in bad taste, without any other perceivable similitude to that great little man of Twickenham. See appendix for sundry extracts from "My Satire" on this head.

To scribble stories with an aching head,
Till the half-witted yawn o'er the half-read ;*
Who, while his coat looks threadbare in the sun,
And on his doorstep waits the weary dun,
Sits down to fancy scenes in glittering halls,
Regardful of his butcher's bootless calls ;
Counting off chapters, spider-like, spun fine,
" So many must be finished ere I dine !"

I know a man—if slander doth not err—
Who, all his money gone, turned usurer !
And so lives better—if the town don't lie—
Than ever chanced to him in days gone by.
So I, perhaps, now all my chances gone,
Asking for bread, receiving but a stone,

* "Till the half-drunk lean over the half-dressed"—*The Season.*

May yet succeed by sneering—which from me
Should ooze like sap from some poor wounded
tree ;

Till my few friends shall say when this they hear :

“ If he can’t write, at least he’s learned to sneer.”

Oh ! it is hard a path to Fame to carve ;

To hug your hobby—and grow grey and starve ;

With tear-blurred eyes to bow ’neath Sorrow’s load ;

Harder than breaking stones upon a road,

Harder, because for that the parish pay ;

Whereas the public yawn—and turn away

From him, who humbugged by fond Fancy’s whim,

Thought if he piped for them, they’d dance for him.

In Satire’s lists I hurl the gage of war :

A scribbler’s nothing—if not singular.

Oh ! my coy public, to your Mævius* list,
And let me—let me be a satirist !

Oh ! great James Grant, wilt advertise my fame ?
“ Kotu ” to me—and I will do the same ;
Like Captain Norton†—writing notes, that still
His bright brass cannon stays at Rosherville.
Great Grant ! to thee I kindly will “ kotu ; ”
Say, wilt thou puff me in a good review ?
Star of “ The Morning Advertiser,” hail !
Great on the grievances of bitter ale,
No better editor our time will see,
For “ public ” politics—and piety.
Now the Amphitryon of Meux’s stout ;
Now waxing Protestant o’er “ cold without ; ”

* “ Qui Baviū non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi.”
Virgil, *Ecl.* iii.

† One of the *Morning Advertiser’s* pet grievance-mongers.

Now telling Government some honest truth,
Now 'gainst Napoleon—now 'gainst Maynooth.
Smile on me, Grant!—thy faith I'll not abuse :
No story 'bout some sovereign of the Jews,
No Greek inscription have I to make plain
For spiteful printers grinning in Shoe Lane ;
No cruel joke upon thy faith I'll pass,
For sympathy don't write me down an ass—
Puff me—and prove thyself a man of taste ;
My grilling goose with fulsome flattery baste ;
And further eulogy I shall not want :
Enough for me the praise of classic Grant !

And thou, inspirer of this simple song,
To whom of right doth gratitude belong,
Here let me thank thee— offering thee the bays
That may not greenly twine around my lays :

By thee my "Gradus Ad Parnassum's" shown,
 Without thy verse, I'd never scrawled my own.
 Call me thine angry echo, if thou wilt :
 Be thine the glory—and be mine the guilt
 Of taking up thine own abandoned harp—*
 Simply to show, how easy 'tis to carp !
 Peace 'tween us two—we've both a restless quill
 That Fate would never suffer to stand still.
 Why when one dog is baying at the moon,
 May not another next-door take up tune ?
 Of the whole "Season" when thou makest glee,
 May not another do the same of thee ?
 I own thy talent—unto me be just :
 Hid in a napkin may it never rust !

*" Who 'youth' 'tis true, not passionate for pelf,
 Care—most of all—to cultivate myself.

Who will not—though the Gods know best—perhaps,
 Resume my pen till fruitful years elapse."

My Satire and Its Censors.

Long may'st thou write—find publishers to print,
Papers to praise thee always without stint.
I never saw thee—and may never see
How kind a heart the satirist's may be,
Piercing in rhyme his literary flies,
Not that he hates them—but that pleasure lies
In making this unto the poor flies known,
How rarely sharp's that needle of his own !
My tilt is o'er—my helm I'll now unlace,
Till thou and better knights shall take my place ;
If so, before fair women and brave men,
Perchance right recklessly ye'll tilt again,
And doughty deeds do, as brave satirists,
If the kind publishers will put up lists.
Austin ! good bye—unto thine elbow power !
Thy satire had amused me one gay hour,
But that alas ! 'twas grief and shame to see
A good knight strike so much below the knee :

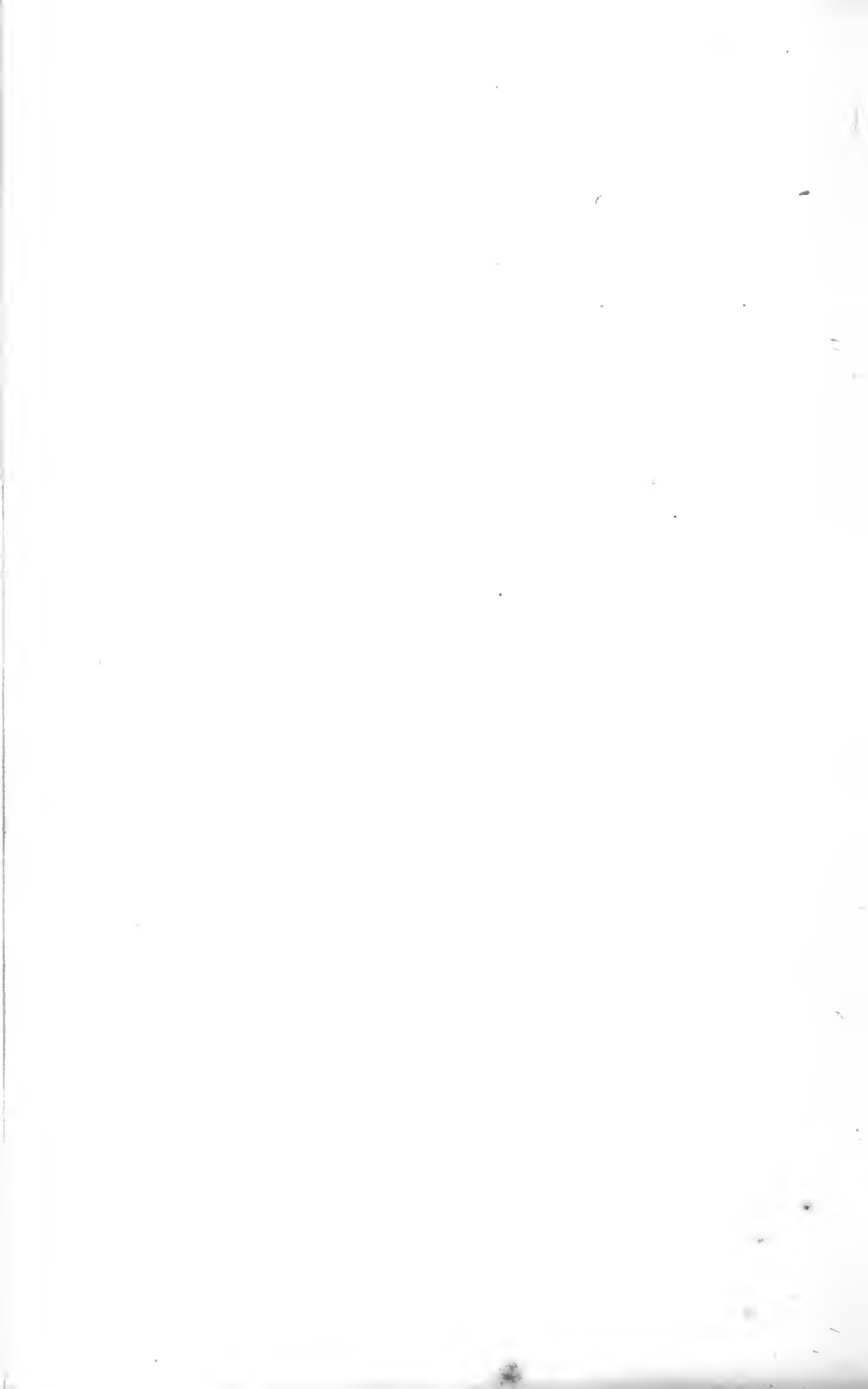
Tilting at Dixon, sure a goodly foe,
Say, was it well to point thy lance so low ?

My patient public—it is nearly time
I dropped my pen, and ceased to you to rhyme—
Perchance, as yet, all too unskilled to write,
I, a young literary Ishmaelite,
Cuffed into satire in misfortune's school,
But reckless rhyme to prove myself—a fool ;
Learning hereafter, as reviews may show,
To make a fool how many a rhyme can go.
I take that chance—and if on me should fall
The scorn of critics, I can bear it all,
And meekly own perchance they're right for once
In swooping down upon a daring dunce.
Thus far I've written in a merry mood,
Surer that this is bad than that is good ;

Craving your patience—if I wrongly wist
The town could bear a second satirist.
Following the scythe of Austin—in my path
Perchance I've failed to find a "lattermath ;*"
Coming too late, in vain upon my stone
I whet my scythe—and see the hay is gone ;
The day declining—and the meadows bare ;
The public jaded—and no "largesse"† there—
My friends deploring—till, as now, I spy
A chance to shuffle off—and say—Good-bye !

* Latter math—i.e., later mowing; in some districts there is a second crop of hay, so called in contradistinction to the first.

† In Essex, and possibly in some other county, the customary gift to mowers, reapers, &c., is so called.



APPENDIX.

AMONG many other allusions to the original poverty of certain hostile critics, I may quote the following, taken at random, as samples of Mr. Austin's style:—

“To Chelt’nham once in search of *food* and fame,
A discontented counter-jumper came,
With little schooling, but still *less to eat*,
And driven wild by *hunger* and conceit.

* * * * *

A jaded author—spavined journalist.

* * * * *

Wrapping their *rags* about them as they write.

* * * * *

Sometimes it's * critics—Mudie having bought
Half-price the volumes which had cost them nought,
Dine off their Author (fifteen pence a-head)—

* * * * *

They eat for hunger and applaud for pay ;

* * * * *

And to their shame and supper partial grown,
The *Athenæum* claims them for its own.

* * * * *

But little fame and pleasure less redounds
To turn and flog these yelping garret-hounds.”

* The *Athenæum*'s.